

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 3874

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF, IS

SUBJ: RECENT GOI STATEMENTS ON PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

REF: JIDDA 3959

1. THIS IS INTENDED TO BE RESPONSIVE TO QUESTIONS RAISED IN PARAGRAPHS 4A AND B REFTEL. WE ASSUME DEPARTMENT WILL WISH TO SUPPLEMENT INFORMATION PROVIDED AND COMMENT ON 4C.

2. SUMMARY. RUBIN GOVERNMENT PUBLICLY SUPPORTS PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. IT HAS COMMITTED ITSELF TO HOLDING ELECTION BEFORE CONCLUDING ANY AGREEMENT WITH JORDAN INVOLVING WITHDRAWAL FROM ANY PART OF WEST BANK. GOI POSITION ON JERUSALEM REMAINS THAT OF OUTGOING MEIR GOVERNMENT--IT IS CAPITAL OF UNITED ISRAEL BUT OPEN TO ALL RELIGIONS AND PEOPLE. RABIN HAS MADE NO STATEMENT ON SETTLEMENT POLICY IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES SINCE BECOMING PRIME MINISTER. STATEMENTS BY PERES, ALLON AND OTHERS SUGGEST LIMITED PLANS FOR MORE SETTLEMENTS. BUT CURRENT ECONOMIC PRESSURES TO REDUCE PUBLIC SPENDING IN EFFORT TO CONTROL SERIOUS INFLATION AS

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WELL AS POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS SUGGEST IMPLEMENTATION WILL BE

LIMITED. END SUMMARY.

3. WE HAVE CHECKED OUT STATEMENTS BY NEW RABIN GOVERNMENT, WHICH CAME INTO OFFICE ON JUNE 3, IN REGARD TO KING FEISAL'S CONCERNS ON GOI POSITION RE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. THE FOLLOWING SUMMARIZES, TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, CURRENT GOI POSITIONS ON ISSUES RAISED PARA 2C REFTTEL.

4. WEST BANK. RABIN GOVERNMENT HAS NOT REPEAT NOT SAID THAT IT WOULD NOT RELINQUISH ANY PART OF WEST BANK. THIS IS INSTEAD POSITION OF MOST HARDLINE ELEMENTS OF OPPOSITION LIKUD AND RELIGIOUS PARTIES. IN SPEECH TO KNESSET JUNE 3, RABIN STATED THAT AS PART OF GUIDELINES FOR NEW GOVERNMENT, "NO PEACE TREATY WOULD BE CONCLUDED WITH JORDAN IF IT INVOLVED TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS CONCERNING PARTS OF JUDEA AND SAMARIA BEFORE THE PUBLIC WAS CONSULTED IN NEW ELECTIONS." IN PRESS CONFERENCE JUNE 17, SEVERAL HOURS AFTER CONCLUSION OF PRESIDENT NIXON' VISIT, RABIN SAID, "THE QUESTION IS NOT ONE OF A RETURN TO LINES OF JUNE 4, 1967, BUT OF A TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE. I DO NOT KNOW WHEN WE WILL HAVE TO FACE THOSE DECISIONS, FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE NOT YET STARTED. SO IF WE WANT TO PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE, WE SHALL AT A CERTAIN STAGE COME TO THE NEED OF BARGAINING CONCRETELY WITH THOSE WHO WANT TO NEGOTIATE WITH US..."

5. JERUSALEM. AT SAME PRESS CONFERENCE, RABIN WAS ASKED WHETHER SECRETARY WAS REFERRING TO JERSUALEM WHEN HE SPOKE ABOUT PAINFUL DECISIONS. RABIN REPLIED, "I THINK THAT ON THIS POINT ISRAEL'S POSITION

IS SO CLEAR THAT I WOULD BE SURPRISED IF ANYONE THINKS IN THOSE TERMS IN CONNECTION WITH WHAT I HAVE SAID" (EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF GOI PRESS RELEASE).

6. SETTLEMENT POLICY. WE HAVE FOUND NO, REPEAT NO, STATEMENT BY RABIN OR ANY OTHER GOI MINISTER THAT ISREL INTENDS TO BUILD 20 NEW CITIES IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND SPEND 1.2 BILLION ISRAELI POUNDS ON CONSTRUCTION PROJECT.

7. SEVERAL MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS HAVE COMMENTED RECENTLY ON SETTLEMENT POLICY. RAANAN WEITZ, HEAD OF JEWISH AGENCY SETTLEMENT DEPARTMENT, IS CITED IN JERUSALEM POST JUNE 26 AS
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SAYING THAT 50 NEW VILLAGES IN AREAS VITAL FOR SECURITY OF ISRAEL WOULD BE ESTABLISHED IN NEXT FOUR YEARS, WITH PRIORITY FOR THE GALILEE.

(WE BELIEVE MAJORITY OF THESE SETTLEMENTS ARE TO BE LOCATED WITHIN ISRAEL'S PRE-1967 BOUNDARIES.) DEFMIN PERES DURING VISIT TO RAFAH JUNCTION AREA IN NORTH SINAI JULY 9 SAID THAT PACE OF SETTLEMEN
T
IN RAFAH JUNCTION AREA WILL BE ACCELERATED AND DEFENSE MINISTRY

WILL PROVIDE JOBS FOR PROFESSIONALS INTENDING TO SETTLE IN THE AREA. ON JULY 3 FOM MIN ALLON DURING VISIT TO GUSH ETZION ON WEST BANK SAID THAT SETTLEMENT IN TERRITORIES MUST BE SELECTIVE AND STRATEGIC.

8. LABOR PARTY-AFFILIATED KIBBUTZ MOVEMENT IHUD HAKIBBUTZIM EXECUTIVE ANNOUNCED RECENTLY ITS INTENTION TO ESTABLISH SEVEN NEW SETTLEMENTS IN NEXT FIVE YEARS--TWO IN RAFAH JUNCTION AREA, TWO IN DEAD SEA VALLEY, TWO IN NEGEV AND ONE IN SOUTHERN GOLAN HEIGHTS.

9. WE BELIEVE THAT ANY DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR NEW ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS, WHETHER IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES OR WITHIN ISREAL PROPER, ARE LIKELY TO BE IMPLEMENTED SLOWLY AT BEST AND POSSIBLY EVEN CURTAILED. GOI HAS JUST ADOPTED A SERIES OF MEASURES AIMED AT REDUCING GOVERNMENT SPENDING SIGNIFICANTLY IN EFFORT TO COMBAT SERIOUS INFLATIONARY WAVE. IT WOULD SEEM EXTREMELY UNLIKELY THAT GOI COULD SPEND SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS ON NEW SETTLEMENTS IN NEAR FUTURE. WE ARE INCLINED TO THINK THAT POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS WILL ALSO INDUCE RABIN TO MOVE CAREFULLY ON SETTLEMENT POLICY.

10. WE ALSO HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED WITH VIGOROUS ACTION BY RABIN GOVERNMENT AGAINST ILLEGAL ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH NEW SETTLEMENT ON WEST BANK ON JUNE 5 ENCOURAGED BY ARI SHARON AND SEVERAL NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY KNESSET MEMBERS (TEL AVIV 3115). RABIN DEMONSTRATED BY THIS ACTION HIS FIRM DETERMINATION NOT TO BE CONFRONTED BY ILLEGAL FAIT ACCOMPLIS BY HARD LINE ELEMENTS TO ESTABLISH "NEW FACTS" IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.
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